



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSIONER'S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL SUMMARY

MAY 5, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Nicole Arnett, Madelyn Blankenship, Sarah Davenport, Reece Dicken, Rohin Dutt, Joshua Griffith, C.J. Johnson, Solyana Mesfin, Katelynn Perkins, Anastasia Pohlgeers, Lauren Shackelford, Samuel Smith, Caleb Spencer, Lauren Witt, Luke Wyatt

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mi'Keyla Crumble, Renuka Gentela, Laila Hayes, Elizabeth Holcomb, Ying Lin, Madison Ortega

SUMMARY:

Agenda Item: Address from Kentucky Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman

Summary of Discussion and Feedback:

Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman – who also serves as secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet – logged into the meeting to speak to the students and hear feedback from the council on how they are handling this extended period of non-traditional (NTI) instruction. She told the group that students have been the most resilient and hopeful group of people in Kentucky.

Coleman empathized with the seniors who missed out on events like senior prom and graduation. She told the seniors of the council that even though this time in their lives is something they could never have imagined, it will be a moment they will never forget.

Joshua Griffith, a senior at Russell High School (Russell Independent), said the most disappointing aspect of his senior year is the loss of a traditional graduation ceremony due to the COVID-19 emergency. He added that Russell High School will be giving students the option of coming into the school by scheduled appointments to walk across the stage and receive their diploma.

Marshall County High School senior C.J. Johnson said that even though students throughout the Commonwealth are not in the ideal situation right now, they can look to the students of Marshall County to see how to persevere through these tough times. On Jan. 23, 2018, a Marshall County High School student opened fire on the campus – killing two classmates and injuring 14 others.

Follow-up Required: None

Agenda Item: CARES Funding: The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act

Presenter: Robin Kinney, Associate Commissioner, Office of Finance and Operations

Summary of Discussion and Feedback:

Members of the Commissioner's Student Advisory Council were updated on the distribution of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding.

The CARES Act, which was signed into law on March 27, allocates \$30.75 billion in emergency education funding to states. Kentucky will receive about \$223 million – an amount equal to about 4% of Kentucky's annual education budget – for K-12 education from two sources:

- **\$193.2 million from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund**, which is intended to provide local education agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact of COVID-19 on elementary and secondary schools.
- **\$30 million of Kentucky's \$43.8 million share of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund**, designed to enable the nation's governors to decide how best to meet their states' K-12 and higher education needs.

Associate Commissioner Robin Kinney suggested that funds, specifically GEER funds, be used to improve remote learning under non-traditional instruction (NTI) and technology overall. She added that GEER funding also could be distributed to continue providing food service to children.

Kinney explained the role school districts are playing in ensuring students have access to food is critical, and even more important in the summer months. She emphasized students need that support year-round.

Follow-up Required: None

Agenda Item: Summer Learning and Re-entry in the Fall

Presenter: Amanda Ellis, Associate Commissioner, Office of Next Generation Learners

Summary of Discussion and Feedback:

KDE Associate Commissioner Amanda Ellis asked the council for their thoughts on potential barriers districts may face when it comes to the possibility of students re-entering schools in the fall. Currently, KDE is working on guidance for districts and the feedback received from the council will assist in these efforts.

Ellis said she and KDE staff are working with teachers on what curriculum and standards were covered this year, how to prepare to teach students where they are and how to best get them up to speed with everyone returning to school at different learning levels.

Follow-up Required: None

Agenda Item: Mental Health Check-In

Presenter: Damien Sweeney, Program Coordinator for Comprehensive School Counseling, Office of Teaching and Learning

Summary of Discussion and Feedback:

The mental health of Kentucky's students is of the utmost importance – especially during this time of additional stresses. Damien Sweeney, program coordinator for comprehensive school counseling in KDE's Office of Teaching and Learning, conducted a mental health check-in with each of the council members. He discussed sources of COVID-19 stress that students and family members may be feeling at this time.

These sources were:

- Anxiety about exposure and illness;
- Limited connections to others and having a limited support system;
- Lack of cognitive stimulation;
- Limited access to normal coping strategies;
- Stressed family members;
- Limited resources and/or financial stress;
- Loss and grief; and
- Uncertainty.

Sweeney asked the council to list additional reasons they were feeling stress at this time. Some of the answers included feeling burned out and exhausted from NTI, and not having social interaction with friends.

C.J. Johnson said he has been reaching out to friends and encouraging them to do things they enjoy. He said he regularly does this so it does not seem like a random act. He wants his friends to know he is there for them and willing to invest time in them.

Sweeney asked council members to continue to reach out to students in their schools who may not be able to connect with their friends.

Follow-up Required: Students will be updated on any materials distributed regarding student social/emotional health.

Agenda Item: Student Voice

Presenter: Sarah Davenport, Senior, Fleming County High School; Peyton Hall, Junior, Fleming County High School

Summary of Discussion and Feedback:

The Kentucky Student Council Association works to serve all student councils and create a statewide community for growth through service, engagement, recognition, voice, enrichment and support. The student leaders emphasized how council members network with others and retrieve information important to students, such as ways to address culture and climate in schools and how to empower students to make a difference.

Follow-up Required: The student representatives asked council members to contact them if they were interested in bringing the association to their schools.

Agenda Item: Student Voice

Presenter: Toni Konz Tatman, Interim Director of Communications, Office of the Commissioner

Summary of Discussion:

Due to the large number of Commissioner's Student Advisory Council members who will graduate this year, there are 14 seats open for the 2020-2021 year. Because of this, KDE is seeking high school applicants for the 2020-2021 council.

As of May 5, 85 applications have been submitted for these 14 seats. The application deadline is May 15.

Future Meetings:

May 21, 2020